

THE GRAPPLER

The Official Newsletter of the Bucknell Wrestling Program



NOTES FROM COACH Dan Wirnsberger

Dear Alumni, Family, and Friends of the Program,

I hope that this edition of our newsletter finds you well. With the Spring semester in full swing, we have been busy both on the mats and in the classroom. Academically our guys continue to excel. They understand the importance of balance and time management. I am extremely proud of their effort in the classroom. For the Fall semester, we had 24 guys with above a 3.0 and 15 of the 24 made Deans List with a 3.5 or higher. Wow! Amazing accomplishment for our squad.

We have been battling through several injuries throughout the season and the team has shown tremendous resiliency and grit as we ask someone else

to 'step up.' We've seen five starters go down to this point and our team has responded well with the "next man up" mentality. Our depth has helped us to fill certain spots when needed.

It's a credit to our guys and their readiness to prepare and compete.

This type of adversity has brought our team closer together. The experience gained by each individual will prepare us well for the future.

Tyler Smith continues to improve as he sets his sights on March. His goal is to be an EIWA Champ as well as an NCAA Champ. He has been laser focused and is ready to make a run in March. He gained valuable experience and national exposure with his 3rd place finish at the Midlands Championships.

Our team is looking forward to finishing as well as possible as

we move into the final few weeks of our dual season. We want to honor our seniors as they near the end of their careers. They have given a lot to our program and will leave here better people from when they started.

We have recently started a new form of video communication via Twitter, "At the

Coach's Desk". Our plan is to release bi-weekly video updates throughout during our competition season, and monthly video updates from April through October. Each update will be less than 2 1/2 minutes long, and will be designed to keep you up to date with the program.

I hope to see you at an upcoming match, or at our annual golf outing this Spring!



My Best,
Dan



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Quick Quotes from New Faces

New to our newsletter, our "Quick Quotes" section is designed to give a brief glimpse into the thoughts of some of the newest members of the Bucknell Wrestling Family. Look for new quotes from new faces in each edition of our newsletter!

This year's freshman class includes Jack Mulay, a Homewood, Illinois native who is looking to work his way into the lineup at 157 pounds. We plucked our two favorite quotes from our conversation with Jack.



"I just really want to be a resource for my teammates."

"Tom Sleigh continually emphasizes a positive attitude and a commitment to the team. He has shown the young guys what "hard work" really is."

-Jack Mulay

Drew Phipps recognized as Bison Athlete of the Week



Drew Phipps was honored as the Bison Athlete of the Week after going 2-0 in the 184-pound

weight class during the dual against Harvard and Brown on Jan. 19 and 20.

Against the Bears, Phipps upset No. 16 C.J. LaFragola in sudden victory overtime. The sophomore scored a takedown with 21 seconds left in the frame to stun LaFragola, 6-4, and earn his first collegiate win over a nationally ranked wrestler.

The day before, Phipps outlasted Kanon Dean, who entered the bout with

a 17-9 record. With less than 30 seconds remaining in a hard-fought third period, Phipps recorded a takedown to break a 4-4 deadlock; though he ceded an escape, he managed to hold off Dean the rest of the way to win by a narrow 6-5 decision.

Phipps now stands second among Bison in overall (15) and dual (6) wins. He has emerged victorious in seven of his past 10 bouts, taking two by major

decision and one by technical fall.

Phipps is the third Bucknell wrestler to be selected as the Bison Athlete of the Week in 2017-18, joining Nick Stephani (Dec. 18) and Tyler Smith (Jan. 1). Stephani was honored for his role in the team's 20-16 victory over Pitt while Smith captured this award following his third-place finish at the prestigious Ken Kraft Midlands Championships. ■

The Significance of Service

by Raymond Cotto



My name is Raymond Cotto. I grew up in Westchester, New York, and until the birth of my little sister, Lucy, my family lived a pretty regular life. It was because of her that my family and I became so heavily involved in the non-profit organization, Operation Smile.

Operation Smile is an international organization that fund raises money and provides free, safe, and timely surgical care to children with facial deformities all around the world. My little sister Lucy was born on May 21st, 2001 with Pierre Robin Sequence and a cleft palate. This led to seven surgeries and years of speech therapy. My family was fortunate, and we were

able to give my sister the surgeries she needed.

However, through this process, we realized that there are families all around the world who don't have the ability to help their children financially. This was the point we became involved in Operation Smile. What first started with simple donations soon led to both my parents and my older sister going on medical missions to help children all around the world.

I personally became involved in Operation Smile my sophomore year of high school. In the beginning of the school year, I started and became the president of my very own Operation Smile school club. Creating an original way of fundraising through my wrestling team, "Pin for a Smile", I raised \$11,000 in my first year, which earned me the award for the most money raised by a first year high school club in the country.

I continued this method of fundraising throughout my junior and senior year. In the fall of my senior year I was awarded with the opportunity of going on a mission to Sangzi, China with the Student Programs of Operation Smile to

help children in any way I could. At the end of my senior year, I was the recipient of the Francis Peterson award which is given to the individual who raised the most money worldwide during a given time period. Raising over \$35,000 in three years through my wrestling team brought me closer to my community, my team, and gave me the opportunity to make a difference.

Philanthropy was a large reason that I decided to attend Bucknell. Being such a monumental aspect of my life, I was not ready to go to school unless I knew I could make a difference. This is why I chose to join the Bucknell wrestling family. Whether it be through cleaning the river, hosting a 5K, or helping run youth events at football games, the Bucknell Wrestling Family is heavily involved in the community and making sure we do our part to give back.

Prior to coming to school I was fearful that I would not be able to continue helping people through Operation Smile, but now I realize that being a member of the Bucknell Wrestling Family helps me continue to make a difference, just in a different way. ■



Remaining Matches in the 2017-18 Dual Season

Fri, Feb 02

**Franklin & Marshall *
Lancaster, Pa. @ 7:30 PM**



Sun, Feb 04

**American *
Washington, D.C. @ 2:00 PM**



Sun, Feb 11

**Army West Point *
Lewisburg, Pa. in Davis Gym
@ 2:00 PM**



Sat, Feb 17

**Bloomsburg
Lewisburg, Pa. in Sojka Pavilion
@ 6:00 PM**



All dates and times tentative and subject to change
*Conference Games

Home: A Growing Perspective

by Brandon Stokes



As many high school students are deciding where their lives will take them after graduation, most are tasked with the decision to stay rooted close to

home or to venture out into everything the world may have to offer. This decision seemed to come almost too easy for me.

As my high school years drew to a close, I knew that as I was looking at opportunities that would keep me close to home. I was looking for a place where I could maintain close family ties and continue to utilize the support system that my parents have been able to provide.

Bucknell provided the perfect opportunity for me to obtain a world-class education and compete as a Division I athlete while only being 8.4 miles from where I was raised. While many people choose to venture out and "get away" from home, I was able to find peace-of-mind knowing that a home cooked

meal and an evening spent with my siblings was only a 15-minute drive away.

While I grew up in Milton, I have grown more and more comfortable calling Bucknell "home". During my freshman year at Bucknell, I learned how to cook a little better, do my own laundry a little more, and how to grow up a little faster. But as with any progress, there needs to be a little bit of sacrifice. I have sacrificed some of the usual things that I had in my life to be able to continually improve myself as a person and as this was facilitated by my teammates and coaches at Bucknell. There is no doubt that over the past 1 1/2 years, I have found myself becoming a better version of myself.

In being this close to home, I find myself frequently being asked the question, "What's it like being so close (to home)?" and it always seemed to be phrased with a negative connotation. I have never had negative feelings about staying close to home for college, as I feel that it has helped to make my transition a little bit smoother. My definition of "home" has grown to include Bucknell while my family has also grown to include the Bucknell Wrestling Family. I am confident in knowing that my extended family will continue to support me in the years to come. ■

David Marble '10, has returned to Bucknell to Serve as Manager for Athletics Development and the Bison Club



In his new role, Marble will partner with volunteers, coaches, University and Athletics administrators and Development and Alumni Relations staff to solicit support for Bison Athletics. During his time in the Orange and Blue, Marble was a 4-time NCAA qualifier and with 111 career wins, he currently sits at 5th in the Bucknell Wrestling record books. We caught up with Dave to ask him a few questions:

Q After you graduated in 2010, you stayed on staff for three seasons as an assistant coach until 2013. Run us through your story from 2013-present.

A “I loved the seven years I spent with the Bucknell Wrestling Family and the Lewisburg community. I grew up in a very small town, so I wanted to expand my knowledge of the world. I took a risk by moving to a new job in a very different location; Alexandria, VA. I spent four years as an insurance producer for property and casualty, health insurance, life insurance, and estate planning services. I learned a lot about business and more about the importance of relationships, particularly relationships of mutual trust. I realized that I did not want to spend my life in insurance. I moved to Salesforce, the fastest growing technology

company in history. The opportunity taught me about the technology industry. I worked with the public sector and Department of Defense community. Experience outside of Bucknell has given me the insight to move back to college athletics.”

Q What made this new position attractive to you?

A “I knew the gentleman that preceded me and noticed that he had left. After some thought, I decided that the position would benefit my career. It would also put me in a role that I am passionate about. My wife, Nicole, was very supportive. I cannot thank her enough for the motivation she provides. Without her blessing, I would not be in Lewisburg. It took me 29 years, but I finally have a career goal to become the VP of Development or an Athletic Director. The path I take will be a result of the opportunities that present themselves. Hard work does not guarantee success, it only gives you the best chance to succeed. I promised the folks in Development and Alumni Relations that I will do my job with passion, perseverance, and

a strong work ethic. These pillars of success will benefit students like myself in a lifelong fashion.”

Q With your new role at Bucknell, is there any messaging that you would like to share with Alumni and Friends of the program?

A “My last point resonates with this question. I’ll add that my goal is to make the experience of Bucknell students, athletes, and alumni better than they could have dreamed. As the Manager for Athletic Development, I focus on the 27 DI varsity programs. But, my work will extend to everyone in the Bucknell Family. There are many programs (academically and athletically) that are competitive on the national stage. I do not want us to be competitive. I want us to be the best. Support of Bucknell Alumni will help that cause. More importantly, it will bring us closer as a community. Thank you for your continued support. If I haven’t already, I look forward to meeting you. ■



Buffalo Valley Regional Training Center Update: NYAC and U.S. Open on the Horizon



The BVRTC’s three resident-athletes: Kevin LeValley, Dan Neff, and Austin Miller are preparing for a full Spring competition schedule. This year’s Bill Farrell Memorial Inter-

national will be held in New York City March 30-31. The U.S. Open is slated for April 26-28 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Our resident-athletes will be seeking either a 1st place finish

at the Bill Farrell or a top-7 finish at the U.S. Open to punch their tickets to the 2018 World Team Trials.

With our 2017-2018 season in full swing, the Buffalo Valley Regional Training Center seeks your support. Please visit <http://www.bvrtc.com> for more information. Coach Wirnsberger and his staff have begun and will continue to pursue communications on annual program contributions and

additional financial support for the Buffalo Valley Regional Training Center. Once again, we need to emphasize that the Buffalo Valley Regional Training Center is a new initiative and it is crucial that any financial contributions made to the Buffalo Valley Regional Training Center should not take place of yearly contributions to Bucknell University or Bucknell Wrestling. ■



For some of the best information on all of the EIWA action this season, be sure to visit our conference website: www.eiawrestling.org.



Wrestling
Bucknell University
One Dent Drive
Lewisburg, PA 17837



2018 Bucknell Wrestling Golf Tournament and Bowling Extravaganza!



The Golf Tournament will take place on **Friday, May 11th, 2018**. Registration brochures will be sent via email by the end of February. For more information, or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities for your business, please contact Assistant Coach Kevin LeValley: kl011@bucknell.edu or (719)771-0160.

Bucknell Wrestling Bowling Extravaganza: Saturday, May 12th - We are excited to announce the addition of the 1st annual Bucknell Wrestling Bowling Extravaganza to the golf outing weekend. On Saturday, May 12th from 1-3pm, we would like to invite you and your family to join us at the Lewisburg Lanes (located at 127 Buffalo Road in Lewisburg).

- The cost of this event is \$30 per adult and \$10 per child 12 and under.
- Two hours of unlimited bowling, pizza and beverages will be provided. Each strike scored will serve as an entry into a raffle.
- Look for registration information for this event in the Golf Outing brochure. ■

WRESTLING CONTACT INFORMATION

Head Coach: Dan Wirnsberger / 570-577-1035 / djw020@bucknell.edu
Assistant Coach: Kevin LeValley / 719-771-0160 / kl011@bucknell.edu
Assistant Coach: Jim Gibson / 570-577-1755 / jmg059@bucknell.edu
Volunteer Assistant Coach: Dan Neff / danielneff149@gmail.com



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